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"THE HOLY GRAIL:"

A STUDY AND A RETROSPECT.

BY

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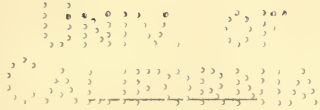

LONDON:
ISAAC PITMAN & SONS, 1 AMEN CORNER, E.C.
BATH: PHONETIC INSTITUTE.
NEW YORK: 3 EAST FOURTEENTH STREET.

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HENRY MORSE STEPH

ERATUM.—Page 13, *paronomasia* for *paranomasia*.

HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

TO

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON,

POET-LAUREATE,

THIS STUDY

OF ONE OF THE NOBLEST POEMS BY WHICH

HE HAS ENRICHED OUR LITERATURE

IS

GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

The study which is attempted in these few pages is directed not so much to the literary charm of an eminently beautiful poem as to the relation in which that poem stands to other works of imagination, or of didactic significance, in our national Literature, which have their origin in a similar theme or their object in a common instruction.

If any apology for such an attempt be needed, it may, perhaps, be found in the last line of the poem itself—"So spake the King, I knew not all he meant"—words which, by their oracular suggestiveness, seem at once to invite inquiry, and to justify a diligent excursion along the paths of probable interpretation.

"THE HOLY GRAIL:"

A RETROSPECT.

IN TENNYSON'S poem of the Holy Grail, we possess not only a literary gem, fashioned with consummate skill and flashing with surprising light, but the last and most perfect recital of an oft-told tale—"the representative fiction of the Middle Ages."

In the survival of a myth or legend which, having no ascertained foundation in fact, owes its diffusion and vitality to the core of truth which is in it, there must ever be an interest apart from its antiquity. The story of the Grail transports us into no "vanished world of fable and adventure." It is not a fossil which was once alive, a coin which once was current, that we are called upon to examine or possibly to admire, but a survival from the distant past, a Message as well as a Myth, in which the pulse of truth has never ceased to beat.

Varying in form, assigned locality, period and per-

sons; varying too in its style of narration, included incidents, and apparent aim; ranging in its treatment from modest simplicity, through elaborations of ingenuity, utter complexity and confusion, back to a nobler simplicity at last; surviving revolutions of thought and modifications of belief; the story of the Holy Grail has come down to us enriched by much that it has gathered by the way, and venerable with the associations of the Ages it has taught and cheered.

Some knowledge of the history of this remarkable legend, and the modifications which it has undergone, is necessary not only to the elucidation but the appreciation of the Poem of the Laureate.

In the existing narrative, three stories, once absolutely distinct, are brought together and happily combined. They are—(1) The Story of the Grail and its Quest; (2) The Romance of Arthur and the Round Table; and (3) The Legend of Joseph of Arimathea. How these three became one, and that one the harmonious whole we now possess is the first object of inquiry. The original story of the Grail is evidently pure invention; whether didactic in its purpose, or merely fanciful, is an open question. Whether Arthur ever lived we are at liberty to doubt, but that he will never die we may be well assured. Whether Joseph of Arimathea ever came to Britain it is safe to question, except, perhaps, at Glastonbury. Now and henceforth, however, these mythic tales are part and parcel of our literature, and have a vividness of reality, which is often denied to the unchallenged facts of history itself.

Of all the literary monuments of the Age of Chivalry there is none more famous than the Cycle of Arthurian Romances; of all that Cycle there is none which reaches so high a level as the story of the Grail; and of all the renderings of that story, there is, whether we regard the beauty of narration or the didactic value, none which can be compared with the poem of the Laureate.

The Romance of the Grail can be traced no further back than the last half of the twelfth century, and the credit of its introduction to that Literature in which it has secured an abiding place has to be shared between Guyot of Provence and Walter Map, Archdeacon of Oxford, the reputed author of "Golias," the friend and counsellor of Henry II. To Guyot we may assign the merit of first reciting the story of a mystical cup or vessel which had descended from Heaven and had long since become the object of highest reverence, of closest custody, and vigilant care. Guyot, who wrote about 1160-80, appears to have travelled in Spain and to have been conversant with the Arabian learning there and then ascendant. The Oriental cast of the story as it first transpires is thus easily accounted for. Even in this its earliest form it has a noble significance. The baldest narration can hardly deprive it of a deep suggestiveness, the wildest extravagance of exuberant fancy can hardly obscure its central meaning.

The story takes us back to that great conflict between the Rebel Angels and the armed omnipotence of Heaven which the poet of Paradise Lost has sung

as none else can sing. When Lucifer, Son of the Morning, was cast—

> "With hideous ruin and combustion, down
> To bottomless perdition,"

the sword of the Archangel Michael alighting full upon the jewelled crest of the Arch-adversary smote therefrom one flashing emerald, which fell to earth, and here, after lapse of ages, was by strange chance recovered and fashioned into a shallow vessel, the "Grail" of future fable and of instant care. That emerald was the stone "*Exillis*." Where the stone Exillis fell, how it was preserved, by what means it was recovered and brought to light, and, above all, by what possible consecration its original stain of evil can have been purged and itself henceforth made holy, and the symbol of holiness, we have no hint of knowledge, no gleam of conjecture. Erewhile the jewel of the Rebel's crest, the emerald lustre of his shattered helm—and now a holy vessel symbolical of Heaven's own purity, nay, presently, by closer appropriation, the Cup of the Holy Supper, and the Vessel that received on Calvary the blood which flowed from the pierced side; the sign, symbol, and assurance, of the Presence of the Redeemer in the midst of men! All this! Was ever so strange a chain of incongruities? If we could forget the *fons et origo* of the whole, the stone "exillis," all else were susceptible of the poet's harmonizing skill. An act of oblivion is required, and so the stone and its story have no place in the modern poem, and even in Malory's "History" the Grail is spoken of as a vessel of *gold*.

In Guyot's narrative and its amplification by Wolfram von Eschenbach the stone has found a sanctuary on the summit of Mount Salvagge in Catalonia, and is there enshrined in a temple of surpassing splendour, guarded by warrior-priests of purest life. Chief of these "Knights-Templois" is the King of the Grail; and the genealogy of the Kings extends through many generations, from Titurel first of the line, who reigned 400 years, to Percival, father of Lohengrin contemporary with Arthur. In these narrations the origin of the cup is of less importance than its miraculous virtues—healing to the body and succour to the soul. It unites the virtues of Urim and Thummim and the Serpent of Brass. To reach its sacred sanctuary is given only to the faithful and the pure.

The imagination of the Poets has revelled in the splendours of this Temple of the Grail. The dome, mail-clad with plates of gold, is surmounted with a giant carbuncle aflame with sunlight! Six-and-thirty towers guard the sacred fane, and over each, hovering on outspread wings, a golden eagle! The birds seem resting only on the air; but the cross of crystal, which in fact supports them, symbolises the invisible upholding of the Cross itself to its soldiers everywhere. Entering we are dazzled by fresh magnificence—the dome, golden without, is within of bluest sapphire; thereon the heavenly bodies are jewelled deep; columns of polished brass sustain these mimic heavens, and the crystal pavement not only reflects the resplendent roof, but yields in its clear depths fresh visions of wonder and delight, contrived by the worker in onyx

and in metal in imitation of the denizens of the deep: "Enshrined in the holiest place, bowered deep in exquisite enclosures of sandal wood and gold, of lapis lazuli and marble, lies the Holy Grail."

From all this oriental gorgeousness we have to pass to the curious etymological confusions which beset the names of many of the Knights and even of the cup itself. They are instances of ingenious endeavours to accommodate narratives to words and, in turn, to find in fresh interpretations of words the justification of fresh developments of the ever-crescent tale. Percival, or Parzival, we are told, is from the Persian *Farisi-fal*, which signifies ignorant knight; ignorant, perhaps, in the sense of innocent, and so corresponding to his description "Percival, whom Arthur and his knighthood called the Pure." The earlier story further sustains this meaning by relating how, when Percival had penetrated the forest fastnesses of Mount Salvagge and sat an honoured guest within the temple, he forbore to ask or inquire concerning King or Knight, symbol or splendour, so nullifying the purpose of his coming, seeing that had he asked the cause of the King's sickness that sickness should have ceased, and the King have been restored by the miraculous efficacy of the Grail, which waited only such enquiry to effect his cure. He was, and was content to be, the ignorant Knight; but when, a second time, Percival comes to Mount Salvagge he is no longer silent, the desired question, "What aileth thee?" is proposed, the King is cured, and in due course Percival himself becomes King of the Grail.

So far Guyot; but Chretien of Troyes, telling the story in his turn, and bent upon making a meaning if he could not find one, tells us that Percival means one who "pierces the vales," and thus directs attention to the adventures of the Quest rather than the ignorance of the hero. Others again, with at least equal probability, have decided that the name signifies Companion of the Basin, *per* being basin and *keval* a companion, therefore a Companion of the Basin, somewhat as we have a "Companion of the Bath." More ingenious still is the unriddling of the compound "Sangreal." San-greal is the holy vessel, from *gradalis* a vase or basin, but Sang-rêal is the real blood which it contained or represented, and some portion of which Joseph, it is pretended, had preserved therein; this last being, of course, a later discovery after the "sacring" of the legend by the Church.* "Real," it is again contended, means simply, royal. Everywhere this word-play is encountered. The sick king, Amfortas, is also Pêcheur *i.e.*, the Fisherman, but a shifting of the accent makes him Pécheur, the Sinner, and then, when the Arimathean story is introduced, we find that one of the companions of Joseph is Alain the Fisherman, first King of the Round Table, whose descendants are the Fisher-Kings. The endeavour to establish an Apostolic origin is probably responsible for much of this ingenuity. Though at the best an evident *paranomasia*, even as such this

* "It has been supposed by some that the real blood and not the sacred dish was the object of 'quest' to King Arthur's knights."—MALORY'S *Arthur, v. III., p.* 27.

word-play is not without its value as showing the subtleties of treatment by which each successive modification of the story has been effected ere it reached its present form.

But we have now to shift the locality and therewith the personal surroundings of the drama, alter entirely the conditions of the "Quest," and by grafting in upon the original stock a scion from another stem, endow the whole with a power and beauty far transcending the original conception. The Catalonian Mount must now be replaced by Camelot and Glastonbury, the temple must give place to Merlin's palace, the Kings of Mount Salvagge must make way for Arthur, and the Knights-Templois for those of the Table Round. The Grail itself now flashes with a Pentecostal fire, becomes the cup of the Last Supper, and the Quest which had its objective in a mythical mountain shrine, has now its true goal and satisfaction in the manifestation of the Divine Presence to the faithful and pure of heart in the Vale of Avalon.

All this is brought about by the ingrafting of the Arimathean legend upon the old Romantic Stock, and for this spiritualizing of the susceptible material, giving it at once consistency and purpose, we are indebted in the first instance to Walter Map.

The legend of Joseph of Arimathea, though dating from the second century, does not appear to have found its way into Britain before the twelfth. Geoffrey of Monmouth (A D. 1147) makes no mention of his Mission or his Miracles, and the earliest record of his name as the Apostle of Britain is in the writings of

William of Malmesbury (A.D. 1142), who tells us that Philip sent Joseph into Britain with twelve disciples to preach the Gospel.*

It was a stroke of genius to bring these things together and thus spiritualize a mere romance, and lend romantic interest to a dubious history. The diversity of origin is happily recognised in the poem itself when we find Ambrosius, who, as a Churchman, knows all about the Apostle of Britain, absolutely ignorant of the story of the cup. Of that his old books are silent, "mute of this miracle," as the narrative of the miracle is mute of the stone Exillis and the Catalonian Temple.

Henceforth, the Christian legend being thus incorporated, the vessel is no longer a symbol, but "the cup, the cup itself," the glory of the Table Round, and the occasion of its founding. That table represents the institution of the Holy Supper and is no longer chivalric but Eucharistic, and every enterprize associated with its foundation partakes of its spiritual nature.

Even so, however, there is a great diversity and even contradiction in the resulting narratives, and if examined in the dry light of historical criticism these would be found mutually destructive. Such a treatment they will not endure; but, happily, it is not necessary that they should. According to Map, Joseph having arrived in Britain builds a palace at Glastonbury in which he preserves the sacred relics, not the cup alone, but the spear of Longinus and the

* See Appendix.

sword of the Maccabees. Alain the Fisherman, his companion in travel, becomes Head of the Round Table, and from him are descended in due course Arthur, Lancelot, and the rest. Thus does the imported narrative take precedence of, and virtually supplant, the earlier fable. But there are other versions. In some the Round Table is itself the Grail, and not the Table of the Holy Supper. Some attribute its institution to Joseph himself, others to his son, or nephew, Bishop Joseph II. Some antedate Galahad to Arthur, some synchronize their stories. If fact and consistency were necessary the task of reconciliation were hopeless, but since the value of the whole is independent of circumstance altogether, such an endeavour were equally idle. It is enough to note how out of this chaos of contradictions, anachronisms, and entanglements, there has emerged a poem which, seizing with unerring instinct every element of truth, has harmonized the conflicting versions, and, steadfastly pursuing the central thought, enriched the earlier theme yet further by boldly introducing the questions and teachings of a later day, so that the poem as it stands sets forth the problem of life—not only as it has presented itself to one age or another, but as it is, has been, and must be to the End.

As with the Grail itself, invisible save to the purged vision of the pure in heart, so has it been with the story concerning it. How soon its hidden meaning was neglected and its purpose forgotten, we may judge from the very material illustrations afforded by contemporary history. We are told that the Grail was

presented in 1247 by the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Henry III. of England; and, in the Church of St. Lawrence at Genoa there is still preserved a vessel—*Santo Catino*—taken at Cæsarea by the Crusaders in 1101, which is represented, and perhaps believed, to be none other than the Emerald Cup, the veritable vessel of the mediæval story.

It is possible to be bewildered by all these variations and sceneshiftings, but when we once perceive the underlying purpose of each succeeding modification, the set endeavour to spiritualize and verify the unfruitful story, and make it ministrant to a higher ideal—the clue is found and a new and nobler study is opened to our pursuit.

That the purpose of the later writers is the rescuing a merely romantic story from the domain of Chivalry and dedicating it to the service of Christianity is abundantly clear. It is a "pious fraud." Between the genius of Chivalry and the spirit of Christianity there was, and there still is, a certain antagonism, the reality and importance of which has perhaps hardly received the attention it deserves. We need go no further than our own Literature for ample evidence of the earnestness and activity with which this conflict has been maintained. The slightest survey of that Literature will suffice to show that the principle of Chivalry has been ever and again denounced by the champions of the Cross, and the morality and even the piety of the men of the cowl and the cloister unsparingly impeached in turn by the writers of "Romance." Efforts too there have been, and efforts

Literature holds in honour, to harmonize the ancient feud and reconcile the conflicting claims; but still the strife goes on and seems as far from settlement as ever.

Something there is, of course, common to both these principles. Both raise the standard of human motive and of human action. Both put restraint on human selfishness, passion, and indulgence. Both insist, more or less, on purity as an essential qualification for true service as for spiritual vision. But, and we are bound to recognise the fact, thus far we have nothing peculiar to either Christianity or Chivalry. Pagan Philosophy knows thus much. The religion of Buddha knows thus much. There is a story of the Buddhist pilgrims which in many of its features might be thought to have suggested that of the "Vision" itself. Hiouen-thsang, a Chinese Buddhist, who in the seventh century made an extraordinary pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Buddha, has left a record of his journeyings. In the neighbourhood of Peshawur was a famous cave where the "shadow of Buddha" might at rare intervals be seen by the devout. In Mr Max Müller's "Buddhist Pilgrims" may be read the following account of the "quest" of Hiouen-thsang:—"In the rock itself was a door which opened. All was dark. But Hiouen-thsang entered, advanced towards the east, then moved fifty steps backward and began his devotions. He made one hundred salutations but he saw nothing. *He reproached himself bitterly with his former sins*, he cried, and abandoned himself to utter despair because the shadow of Buddha would not appear before him.

At last, after many prayers and invocations, he saw on the eastern wall a dim light, of the size of a saucepan, such as the Buddhist monks carry in their hands. But it disappeared. He continued praying, full of joy and pain, and again he saw a light, which vanished like lightning. Then he vowed, full of devotion and love, that he would never leave the place till he had seen the shadow of the 'Venerable of the Age.' After two hundred prayers, the cave was suddenly bathed in light, and the shadow of Buddha, of a brilliant white colour, rose majestically on the wall, as when the clouds suddenly open and all at once display the marvellous image of the Mountain of Light. A dazzling splendour lighted up the features of the divine countenance. . . . . After he awoke from his trance he called in six men and commanded them to light a fire in the cave, in order to burn incense. . . . Then five of the men saw the shadow, but the sixth saw nothing. The old man who had acted as guide was astounded when Hiouen-thsang told him of the vision—'Master,' he said, 'without the sincerity of your faith and the energy of your vow, you could not have seen such a miracle.'"

Hiouen-thsang himself says thus concerning the vision :—"Though one does see something it is only a feeble and doubtful resemblance. If a man prays with sincere faith, and if he has received from above a hidden impression, he sees the shadow clearly, but he cannot enjoy the sight for any length of time."* The parallelism throughout is obvious.

* *See* Max Müller, "Chips from a German Workshop."

If we carry the inquiry back to the very beginnings of Literature, or of recorded thought, in our own tongue, we find the two ideas and ideals represented by Cædmon's song of the Creation, and the epic of Beowulf. Cædmon sings of the Rebellion of Lucifer and the Fall of Man, and is worthy of his posthumous fame as the Anglo-Saxon Milton. The fierce strains of the song of Beowulf tell of the deeds of warriors, the slaying of giants, the mead halls of Heorot. The contrast is complete. We pass on to Geoffrey of Monmouth, "Arthur Geoffrey," and his episcopal brother, Giraldus Cambrensis, the redoubtable Gerald of Wales. The contrast now becomes conflict, and we need nothing more than Gerald's story of Melerius to perceive how sharply what was held to be the genius of Chivalry was rebuked by what was believed to be the spirit of Christianity. The story of Melerius is thus related by Gerald:—"There was in our time a Welshman named Melerius, who having always an extraordinary familiarity with unclean spirits by seeing them, knowing them, talking with them, and calling each by his proper name, was enabled by their aid to foretell future events. . . . He knew when any one spoke falsely in his presence, for he saw the devil, as it were, leaping and exulting on the tongue of the liar. . . . If the evil spirits oppressed him too much the Gospel of St. John was placed on his bosom, when like birds they immediately vanished; but when that book was removed and the History of the Britons by Geoffrey Arthur was substituted in its place, they instantly reappeared in greater numbers,

and remained a longer time than usual on his body and on the book."

Similarly does William of Newbury denounce the offending "History." He complains that Geoffrey of Monmouth has "made the little finger of his Arthur stouter than the back of Alexander the Great," and has represented Merlin as a British Isaiah except that he "dared not affix to his prophecies 'Thus saith the Lord,' and blushed to write 'Thus saith the Devil' . . . therefore as in all things we trust Bede, whose wisdom and sincerity are beyond doubt; so that fabler with his fables shall be straightway spat out by us all."

Coming down to the famous fourteenth century we have Langlande in his inimitable allegory of Piers the Plowman anticipating many a point of the modern poem. The teaching of Reason, in "the feld ful of folk," as to the Search after Truth—

> "And ye that seke Seynt James and Seyntes of Rome,
> Seke ye Seynt Truthe, for he may save yow alle;"

the eager acceptance of this "quest" by the assembled "folk,"

> "A thousand of men tho thrungen togideres
> But blustreden forth as beestes over bankes and hilles,"

and the qualified refusal of Piers to share in the adventure,

> "I have an half acre to erie by the heighe weye,
> Had I eryed this half acre and sowen it after
> I wolde wende with yow."

—these will occur to every reader of the earlier allegory as he listens to the words of Arthur—

"And some among you held that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow.
Not easily; seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plough,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done."

With Sir Thomas Malory and his "Arthur" we arrive, a century later, at the full-grown Arthurian legend, the Grail and its great Quest included; but it is easy to see that the heart of the compiler is with the Knights winning worship and renown, rather than with those who are content to render worship and hold themselves unworthy. The other side is heard when Dunbar—the Chaucer of Scotland—takes up his parable and, in the "Merle and Nightingale," brings out afresh the rival motives, contrasting "the frustir love" of the Creature with the love of the Creator. In this elegant little poem the Merle sings the praises of Chivalric love, honour, and devotion, and these the Nightingale disallows, proclaiming instead the falsity and vanity of all love save that bestowed on the Creator:—

"For both is tint, the time and the travail,
Of every love but upon God alone."

Of course the Merle is vanquished and confesses his error—

"Wherefor I counsel every man, that he
With love not in the fiendis net be tone,
But love the love that did for his love die—
All love is lost but upon God alone."

Whereon the two sing together the triumphs of sacred love, greatly to the "recomforting" of the listening poet, who seems to have indited this somewhat one-sided disputation under the influence not only of clerical exclusiveness, but personal disappointment—

> "Me to recomfort most it does avail
> Again for love when love I can find none,
> To think how sang this merle and nichtingale."

A single stave from each of the disputants may suffice to show the character of their harmonious quarrel:—

"The Merle said, Love is cause of honour aye,
Love makis cowards manhood to purchase,
Love makis knichtis hardy at assay,
Love makis wretchis full of largeness,
Love makis swear folkis full of business,
Love makis sluggardis fresh and weil bessen,
Love changes Vice in Virtue's nobleness;
A lusty life in lovis service been."

"The Nichtingale said, True is the contrary;
Sic frustir love it blindis men so far,
In to their minds it makes thame to vary;
In false, vain glory they so drunken are
Their wit is went, of woe they are not 'ware,
While that all worship may be fro them gone,
Fame, guids, and strength: wherefor weil say I dare;
All love is lost but upon God alone."

In Spenser's Faery Queen, as in the Arcadia of Sir Philip Sidney, we are conscious everywhere of the co-existence of the Chivalric sentiment with the Christian principle. The object of the poem is avowed to be "to fashion a gentleman in vertuous and gentle discipline," Arthur being chosen as the

"ensample." The armour of the Red Cross Knight is that "of a Christian man specified by St. Paul, Ephesians v." The temptations successively and successfully resisted, though much elaborated, are in reality just those of Percival's visions; while the conflicts with various dragons and monster forms remind us of the experiences of Beowulf. The endeavour is to make the profitless vain-glories of Chivalry subserviently shadow forth the Christian conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and though the reader may, through the exuberance of the allegory, often lose sight of this, the poet presumably does not. A single quotation will serve to show how, in season and out of season, the poet strives to harmonize the aims of that Christianity and Chivalry which others had persistently set in sharp antagonism. When Arthur is about to part with the Redcross Knight there is a significant interchange of gifts. Arthur bestows on the champion of Una a potent charm, effective against wounds sustained in knightly conflicts, while the Knight presents the King with—a copy of the New Testament!

"Prince Arthur gave a box of diamond sure,
Embowd with gold and gorgeous ornament,
Wherein were closd few drops of liquor pure,
Of wondrous worth and vertue excellent,
That any wound would heal incontinent;
Which to requite the Redcrosse knight him gave
A booke, wherein his Saviour's Testament
Was writt with golden letters rich and brave,
A worke of wondrous grace and hable soules to save."*

* Faery Queen: book 1, c ix., 19.

We come to Milton, and are told that the author of Paradise Lost had it in contemplation or design to write an Epic of which King Arthur should be the hero :—

> "Siquando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges
> Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem !
> Aut dicam invictæ sociali fœdere mensæ
> Magnanimos heroas."*

That Milton should have abandoned this design in favour of Cædmon's loftier theme is the more significant when we remember his genuine admiration of Spenser and diligent study of the Faery Queen.

Coming down to our own day, the evidence is abundant that the embers of the old controversy are still susceptible of being kindled into flame. Arnold of Rugby and Charles Kingsley, like the knights of old who tilted at each other over the black and silver shield, proclaim aloud the different aspects in which Chivalry presented itself to their view. Thus Arnold writes :—"In particular I confess that if I were called upon to name what spirit of evil predominantly deserved the name of Antichrist I should name the spirit of Chivalry, the more detestable for the very guise of the Archangel ruined which has made it so seductive to the most generous spirits, but to me so hateful, because it is in direct opposition to the

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* *Epistola ad Mansum.*—

"If ever I shall recall in song our native Kings,
And Arthur moving mighty wars even from the tomb,
Or tell of the great-souled heroes of the victorious 'Table,'
United in social bond."

impartial justice of the Gospel and its comprehensive feeling of equal brotherhood, and because it so fostered a sense of honour rather than a sense of duty."*

Kingsley on the other hand thus utters in ardent language his belief in the oneness of all noble Chivalry with the faith and practice of Christianity :—"When a man loses that spirit of Chivalry, he loses his own soul. For that spirit of Chivalry, let worldlings say what they will, is the very spirit of our spirit, the salt which keeps our characters from utter decay—the very instinct which raises us above the selfishness of the brute. . . . Some say that the age of Chivalry is past, that the spirit of romance is dead. The age of Chivalry is never past as long as there is a wrong left unredressed on earth and a man or woman left to say I will redress that wrong, or spend my life in the attempt.' . . . The spirit of romance will never die as long as there is a man left to see that the world can be better, happier, wiser, fairer in all things, than it is now."†

Carefully considered there is less real contradiction here than at first appears, and the language of Cardinal Newman may be quoted as indicating the basis upon which reconciliation may be established :—"What is Christian high-mindedness, generous self-denial, contempt of wealth, endurance of suffering, and earnest striving after perfection, but an improvement and transformation, under the influence of the Holy Spirit,

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* Life by STANLEY.

† The Water of Life—C. KINGSLEY.

of that natural character of mind which we call *romantic?*"

Even at this hour how stands the appeal for rectitude of life, and what are its enforcements? Are we adjured thereto by our baptismal or ancestral name? "Bring no disgrace on"—What? The name your fathers have made one with honour and nobility —*noblesse oblige*—or the name you received at the font, which pledged you to a conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil? That name, that Christian name, hardly so shames us in wrong doing, hardly, it may be feared, so sustains us in doing right and suffering wrong, as the *surname* which is the accident of an accident, and dating from a human record dedicates only to the same. Who will deny the validity of this? Who is not conscious of its influence upon himself? Christianity has still its rival, and still there is need to assert, and to insist upon, the proper supremacy of the motives of the Gospel. It is a question of motive as well as of conduct; and in the great ordeal which awaits each unit of the "feld ful of folk" which of these will be decisive of our lot?

"THE HOLY GRAIL:"

A STUDY.

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A STUDY.

SUCH being the antecedent history of the literature of the Grail Romance, it is no ordinary interest which attaches to this its last and noblest recital. It alone, of all the "Idylls of the King," is obviously didactic, and apart altogether from the supreme literary merit of the poem as a creation of genius, the importance of its message and teaching, entitles it to a study of diligent attention and ensures a remembrance of scarcely qualified delight.

Although, the "Holy Grail" being a tale and not an allegory, the characters must be accepted as persons and not personifications, these persons are so strongly characterized by distinctive qualities as to render them evidently typical, and the objects of an allegory are attained without its device. In this way the *Dramatis Personæ*, while much more real than those of the Faery Queen, subserve no less than they a moral purpose, and present with even greater distinctness the qualities by which they are severally identified. Thus Sir Per-

cival represents Purity, as Galahad and the Nun are the embodiments of Sanctity. Sir Bors is Simplicity and unconscious Goodness, or in his relation to the Quest —Humility. Lancelot is Chivalry with all its faults and virtues. Gawain is utter Worldliness. Ambrosius the Monk seems to be the type of plain Humanity, but Humanity that would be holy. Arthur is not only the blameless King, but ideal Manhood. Guinevere is a King's daughter, wedded and pledged to Wisdom and stainless virtue, but, alas, false to her dedication and fallen from her high estate.

This last recalls the earlier allegorizing of John Wycliffe, though *his* "King's daughter" is lost by the fault of her proper guardian, and Guinevere by her own. The moral outcome is, however, much the same. The soul is a king's daughter. "Each man," says Wycliffe, "shall yield reckoning of the keeping of his own soul. For if a king had a daughter like to himself, to whom he thought to give great dignity and worship and took her to any of his realm to keep; the more negligent that man were about her keeping, the stricter reckoning the king would ask of him for her. What then shall the King of Heaven do to him to whom he hath committed a daughter most like to Himself, that is to say, man's soul, the much-loved daughter of this King, and ordained to great honour in the bliss of Heaven, if this man keep her recklessly?" The king's daughter may forget and belie her lineage and forsake her true alliance and destined honour, exchanging light for colour, as Guinevere preferred Lancelot to Arthur :—

"I thought I could not breathe in that pure air,
I wanted warmth and colour, which I found
In Lancelot.
. . . . . .
It was my duty to have loved the highest;
It surely was my profit had I known."

The simplicity of the plan of the poem contributes to its charm. We listen to the fascinating story told under the "world-old yew-tree" by the sometime knight who has abandoned the helmet for the cowl, and, as the simple-minded but sweet-souled Monk—whose long years of seclusion from the world have not sufficed to repress his curiosity as to things without, or quench his sympathies with common joys and sorrows—interjects his questions and gives expression to each emotion roused by the recital, we feel that his questions and emotions are our own. Ambrosius asks what we would ask and feels as we should have felt. It is the very artlessness of art.

"Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,
My brother? Was it earthly passion crost?"

SUCH is the question which draws forth the Tale. The experience of the Monk Ambrosius suggests a not very flattering explanation of the neophyte's abandoning the circle of the Knights, and elicits a correspondingly indignant denial, which at once opens out into the desired narration. That the Monk

was not altogether without warrant for his injurious surmise, we may infer from Percival's own admission concerning the Nun, his sister:

> "Never maiden glow'd,
> But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
> With such a fervent flame of human love,
> Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
> Only to holy things."

Far other is the cause of Percival's withdrawal from the Court of Arthur—"no such passion mine." It is the vision, "the sweet vision of the Holy Grail," which has dimmed the lustre of the Table Round, so that its glories are henceforth "vain glories," its "jousts" and "earthly heats,"—"a waste of spiritual strength." In a word, the charms of Chivalry are powerless against the claims of Christianity, as each is understood. But to Ambrosius this story of the Grail is altogether strange, although, indeed, some half-memory of having heard from one of Arthur's knights of a phantom cup, coming and going, is aroused by its mention—

> "What is it?
> The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?"

To many, besides Ambrosius, the story had meant, to some it even now may possibly mean, little besides. It is for Percival to reveal its full significance. Why Ambrosius had never read, in his "old books," of a mysterious vessel, now visible, now veiled—"veiled in white samite, mystic, wonderful"—the antecedent history sufficiently explains. How much more it is than a capricious apparition we are to learn with the

questioner. The tale related by the knight is that adopted and adapted by Walter Map. It is no phantom that his eyes have seen, but "the cup, the cup itself;" not Guyot's mystic vessel, but that which "Arimathean Joseph journeying brought to Glastonbury," and which, in times of failing virtue, "was caught away to Heaven, and disappeared." Ambrosius has heard of Joseph, but, protesting that his "old books" know nothing "of this miracle," he addresses his inquiry to the new and novel narrative —the narrative of "to-day":—

"Who first saw the holy thing *to-day?*"

To him, eager and attentive, Percival straightway tells of his saintly sister, and the portraiture is one such as no limner's art can hope to equal. The tradition that Joseph instituted the Table is judiciously abandoned, and we are told of a time—

"when *King Arthur* made
His Table Round, and all men's hearts became
Clean for a season" . . "but sin broke out."

and how the sister of Percival, the pale and saintly Nun, moved by her confessor's recital of the legend, conceived the hope that she, by prayer and fasting, might obtain the return of the Grail—"Ah! Christ, that it would come and heal the world of all their wickedness!"

"And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
She might have risen and floated when I saw her."

It is an ideal picture, but the idea is ennobling and elevating, not impossible, neither unattainable altogether. That one impassioned utterance describing the transforming influence of dedication, denoting the visible effect of purity of aspiration—

"Beautiful in the light of holiness,"

lifts us at once into a region of transcendent loveliness; and yet, the thing is so, it is not all ideal. How many a countenance have we not seen, lit with a light no earth-spark ever kindled, beaming with the radiance of a soul holding communion with the skies. It is once again Milton's "Pensive Nun, devout and pure," with—

"Looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes."

Such beauty waxes when form and feature wane, and we feel this later lustre to be the dawning light caught from a nearer Heaven.

Of course she sees, or thinks she sees, the Grail. The holy vision is vouchsafed, and yet it is at best but a transient ecstacy, for soon "the Grail pass'd, and the beam decayed, and from the walls the rosy quiverings died into the night."

But there is yet to be a more perfect beholding, and Galahad is to see, and follow.

"And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armour, Galahad.
'God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'
Said Arthur, when he dubbed him knight."

WE are irresistibly reminded of the exclamation of the pious and warmhearted Gregory when he beheld the Saxon children in the slave market of Rome —"*Non Angli sed Angeli si essent Christiani.*" It is the selfsame thought. Beautiful, yes; but not as yet "beautiful in the light of holiness." That is to come.

Here we meet the doctrine of succession. Galahad is to succeed to the Nun as, hereafter, Percival to Galahad:—"Thou shalt see the vision *when I go.*" So, using the forms of Chivalry, but informing them with a higher purpose, does the pale Nun make Galahad her knight, binding her belt around him, but, far more, sending "the deathless passion in her eyes through him," so that she—

"made him hers and laid her mind,
On him, and he believed in her belief."

"Deathless passion!" Even so. Love, we are told, never dies. Nor does the devotion of a great passion such as this. The king, too, we are told, never dies. Nor does the prophet. The standard bearer falls, but the standard is borne on by another and yet another. This is succession.

"Then came a year of miracle: O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
* * * * * *
O brother, had you known our mighty hall."

THE Temple of Mount Salvagge of the earlier legend is thus replaced by the great hall built by Merlin, and for the oriental splendour are substituted the mystic symbolism of the sculptured zones, and the "Siege Perilous"—fatal to Merlin and auspicious to Galahad alone.

It is evident that the mystic zones are susceptible of two interpretations. Maybe they are susceptible of both. Either the development of the race, or of the individual man, may be intended, just as, in the rationalistic interpretation of the labours of Hercules, we may trace the achievements of progressive civilisation or the exploits of the Hero-pioneer leading the way to Man's dominion over Nature.

"In the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts."

Understood of the mere progress of man to dominion over the creature, this is obvious enough; but, taken to represent further each man's conquest of his own lower nature by the assertion of the claims of the higher, it chimes with the thought and language alike of "In Memoriam"—

"Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die."

"In the third are warriors, perfect men."

THE Roman and the Teuton are agreed in this. With the Roman valour is virtue, and the "Herrman" or "Arminius" of Germany represents the same conception of manhood and manliness. Conflict is a condition of our existence, or at least of our progress. It may be physical, it may be moral. To bear ourselves bravely in this conflict is the mark and measure of the "perfect man"; but, though this is high, it is not the highest. Thus far the "perfect man" is only mortal, his immortality has yet to be asserted. The "warrior" is as much below the man "with growing wings" as he is above the man who has only just succeeded in dominating the animal nature and propensities, "working out the beast," or "letting the ape and tiger die."

"On the fourth are men with growing wings."

A PROMISE and a pledge of another and a higher state of being. With some of us the wings grow but slowly, but as with the Nun, who "might have risen and floated when we saw her," some there are, men of the fourth zone, who are already winged for flight and seem only to wait their summons to spread their full grown pinions and be gone.

"And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown
And peak'd wings pointing to the Northern Star."

A FINE replacement this of the flaming carbuncle surmounting the Temple of the Grail in the Provençal's story! Nor less so of the Arthur of our own Geoffrey of Monmouth. No longer the mere giant killer, not even the perfect warrior and mirror of knighthood. Arthur's crowned statue here embodies a conception of ideal and perfected manhood. The peaked wings point to the pole of the revolving heavens. *There* is the centre about which all things move, not in this lower sphere, not in the Table Round. Nor is this all—"with peaked wings pointing." We can most of us point with our fingers but, alas, how few can point with their wings. To point thus is more than to point thither. To point thus, where we ourselves are going; and to point, with the wings already fledged and quivering for the flight, and so bid men follow where the true order of all things can alone be made manifest—this is leadership and kingship too. Fittingly does it follow that the toilers in distant fields, beholding the splendour from afar, are roused into hope and confidence, and lifting themselves from the stoop of labour join in the gladdening cry—"We have still a king.'

"If I lose myself, I save myself."

THIS is Galahad's golden paradox, and its sentence is an inspiration, rather than an intuition. Merlin's magic skill had not sufficed to "save himself" from the dangers of the "Siege Perilous." The mystic ambiguity of the Seer's portentous utterance, like that older "self"-maxim of Delphi, is itself "perilous for good and ill." To Merlin himself it meant destruction —for "once by misadvertence Merlin sat, in his own chair, and so was lost"—to Galahad, deliverance. These half-truths ask wise interpreting. "Know thyself!" despite Pope's famous re-assertion of its completeness—

> "Know then thyself, enough for man to know
> Virtue alone is happiness below."
>
> "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan
> The proper study of mankind is man."—

is but a half-truth after all, and a very "perilous" half-truth too. How many have found by bitter experience that "self-knowledge without God-knowledge is self-torture!" The secret of the "Siege Perilous" is not with Delphi, nor with Merlin, but with Galahad. To "lose myself" is the desire by and through which all vision of the higher life becomes attainable. Even Percival had yet to learn by bitter experiences what Galahad perceived at once. The *presence* of the Grail with all its attendant mystery and terror was realized by all the knights, the *vision* of the Grail was as yet for Galahad alone—

"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me."

The Ancients fabled in their story of the Cave of Trophonius that the heart might be purified by fear. A doubtful process. "Perfect love casteth out fear," and it was in the boldness of such love that Galahad took up the Quest.

"I sware a vow before them all, that I
Because I had not seen the Grail would ride
A twelve month and a day in quest of it."

HERE then begins the Quest, proclaimed, not by Galahad, but by Percival; accepted not only by Galahad but by Gawain. Galahad vows because he *has* seen, Percival because he has *not*, Gawain because the others swore, and *he* sware "louder than the rest."

"What said the King, did Arthur take the vow?"

WITH the answer to this most natural question of the Monk, a new element of interest is disclosed. To diversity in the aims and qualifications of the knights is added the antagonism suggested by the disapproval

of the king. So far from taking the vow, Arthur disparages the enterprise altogether, and this in terms of seeming scorn, though spoken "more in sorrow than in anger." He tells his knights that they are leaving the plain path of duty for a self-chosen enterprise, which will end for most of them in failure and disappointment. Arthur is altogether on the side of those who insist on doing whatsoever the hand finds to do rather than rushing after any who may proclaim a sounding mission or a sensational service. And his objection is twofold. On the ground of needful work neglected, as well as of unbidden work lightly accepted, does he utter his protest. "Brother, the King was hard upon his knights." Was he too hard? "They had not seen, and therefore had they sworn." They "followed but the leader's bell." The exposure of the hollowness and self-deception of this imitative ambition is complete. It is not duty, but what Carlyle calls "swarmery,"—the mere momentum of a headlong crowd.

* * *

"For such as thou art is the vision—not for these."

TO Galahad, indeed, the quest is not only lawful but imperative. Nor is the reason for this discrimination far to seek. "One hath seen and all the blind will see." In the records of history, as in the experience of daily life, how frequently does this

miserable infatuation find various examples. It may be a Crusade, sweeping into its mighty current multitudes of enthusiasts; or it may be a mere "follow my leader" excitement of this age of "movements," which finds in domestic duty and home ties a drudgery and bondage, and, imagining a "call" which has never been heard, disdains the state of life for which we are fitted, to embark on enterprises more attractive because more congenial to our self-esteem. But, "How may we know?" This is a very real question with many, possibly with all who are in earnest about the conduct of their life, and the fulfilment of its trust. How may we know whether this desire for a larger field of action, a more distant scene of service, is or is not the "call" which Galahad so distinctly heard, and Arthur himself owned he was right to obey? If the narrative means anything at all it clearly insists on this, that such a call is not only imperative but distinct. It is not born of emulation or of imitation. It is not heard by crowds, but by "single saintly souls sealed to their sacred service." No lesson is less palatable to our spiritual pride, none is more necessary to its correction. As the narrative unfolds, the wisdom of Arthur's warning is more and more manifest, and the varied experiences of the Quest become allegories of palpable application.

"And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
Of all my late shown prowess in the lists.
. . . . . and I knew
That I should light upon the Holy Grail."

THIS elation of Percival augurs but ill for his immediate success. "Never yet had heaven appeared so blue nor earth so green." The quick reaction and revulsion to something like despair are not only a disenchantment, but a discipline and direction.

"Then every evil word I had spoken once,
And every evil thought I had thought of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried 'This Quest is not for thee.'"

THE falsity of all this, as he is presently to learn from the Hermit, is evident enough, but it is equally inevitable, not only as the reaction from false elation, but as the experience of all whose hearts are set upon beholding the holy Vision, but who have not emancipated themselves from themselves, "as Galahad." Till this is done the Quest may be undertaken, but hardly in truth begun, and the Vision is impossible. It is the story of a soul's agony. All things turning into dust, and the world—so fair and wholesome to others, but now so joyous and sufficient to ourselves—only a wilderness of sand and thorns. A Gawain will soon

give up the quest and revert with satisfaction to the low contentment, and even enjoyment, of a self-satisfying existence; but for Percival this at least is for ever impossible. Fail he may, but abandon the Quest he will not. Confidence may give place to despondency, and hope be succeeded by despair, but purpose and resolve continue firm. He has "put his hand to the plough," and there is no looking back.

Yet still his visions, as he presses on, all have self for their centre. Each in turn—Satisfaction of the Senses, Domestic Comfort, Mammon, Fame—turns to dust in its attainment, till at length, crushed in spirit and well nigh broken in heart, he cries in the bitterness of despair—"So if I find the Holy Grail itself, and touch it, it will crumble into dust."

Is this true? Do such visions and such disappointments attend the Quest, or what the "Quest" may stand for, in the conduct of life? A chorus of affirming voices will testify from every Age. The "visions" may vary, but the central experience remains ever the same.

• • •

"And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the vale
Was lowest, found a chapel, and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he said,
'O son, thou hast not true humility.'"

HERE we reach the full solution of Galahad's paradox, the explanation of Percival's discomfiture and failure, "O son, thou has not true humility!"

The teaching of all this is a corrective to much that is largely held for true and proclaimed as wholesome —the clarion voice of the Excelsior mountains. Not where the hill was highest, but where the vale was lowest did Percival find his disillusionment. It is well that this Excelsior key should thus be moderated and modulated. "Excelsior" is a spirit stirring cry, but "thou hast not true humility" is a necessary admonition. The way to the highest may, for most of us, lie through the lowest. "This is the way thider," said Piers the Plowman, "ye moten go thorugh mekeness, both men and wyves." Herbert and Keble have seen this and set it forth in harmonies of beautiful consent, and the unadorned simplicity of the Catechism of our children inculcates the selfsame teaching. When Herbert tells us that

> "Who sweeps a floor as to God's praise
> Makes it and the action fine,"

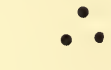
he but anticipates what the kindred spirit of Keble has made familiar in our mouths as household words—

> "The daily round, the common task,
> Should furnish all we ought to ask;
> Room to deny ourselves—a road
> That leads us daily nearer God."

Must we regard these teachings as extremes between which we have to seek some happy mean? Avoiding either, shall we say—"*In medio tutissimus*"? Not so.

The path that leads us daily nearer God *is* the true Excelsior. It may be swept with Herbert's broom, or trodden by prophets and martyrs. The "call" is everything; and so as our Catechism, simply as wisely, words it, I have "to do my duty in that state of life to which it shall please God to call me." Immediate and obvious duty: this first, and then, in any "state to which," any service for which—be that state or service what it may—be the renunciations or humiliations what they may, to do my duty still. So is duty, not desire, the first thing and the last thing—where, and how, and when, the attentive soul will surely find. This "state to which" is not left to my choosing, but it will be blessed in my obedience. Where it pleases God to call me, there it will please God to find me; there also, persevering to the end, I shall find God.

To some natures indeed the stimulating cry is needful, its influence only good, but we may take "self" with us to the very mountain crest, and our climbing will be all as vain as Percival's. Even the contemplation of our own sinfulness, our evil thought, and word, and deed, may be excessive, and, as such, is here condemned—"What is this thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy *sins?*" There is such a thing as vain shame as well as vain glory. Not that way lies deliverance. I must look out of myself and beyond myself. The poet tells us whither.



"And all her form shone forth with sudden light,
So that the angels were amazed, and she
Follow'd him down, and like a flying star
Led on the gray-haired wisdom of the east."

THE Story of the Star, as told by the Hermit, may be called the last of the Myths, nor is it the least beautiful. All have wondered at that Star, some have followed it, but we are now told, in fable, but fable of transparent clearness, what it means. Humility is the harbinger of the Advent, and in the robes of Humility the Lord of all things came to His own. His own received Him not. In those robes they knew Him not. Humility itself—herself—till then had never been disclosed, even in Heaven. Pride had been possible, and Lucifer had fallen; but now the angels are amazed at the pure radiance of the unclouded star which guides the Wise Men of the East to the Babe at Bethlehem. Humility amazes the Angels. Henceforth it is the theme of their chiefest praise, henceforth the glory of all glories, inspiring the Anthems of Heaven and the Hosannas of Earth. "Behold thy King cometh to thee riding upon an ass!" These too brief Hosannas of Jerusalem echo the Hallelujahs of Bethlehem, but, alas! the Hallelujahs and the Hosannas are hushed in distance and we flaunt our banners of a strange device, and shout our Shibboleths of unknown tongue —we have not true humility, we have not lost ourselves to find ourselves, as Galahad.

"Thou shalt see the vision when I go."

THE "passing of Galahad" is dark with excessive light. It is the very ecstasy of vision, and no more lends itself to the process of analysis or of exact interpretation than do the phantom pictures of the night. And yet it is no dream. Some things are clear and real enough. We are reminded here, on the threshold of a series of failures, that it is the fault of the seekers, not the unattainableness of the thing sought, which is the cause of failure. Once again we are assured that there is ever a succession of witnesses. As it was when Elijah's mantle fell upon Elisha, so is it here; indeed it is impossible not to revert in thought to that greater "passing" which one alone might witness. Whether designed or accidental the comparison is inevitable. Percival succeeds to Galahad as he to the Nun by whom the idea of the Quest was first conceived, and the succession is related in terms almost identical. Of the Nun it is said

"She laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief."

And so of Galahad and Percival—

"his eye dwelling on mine
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him to believe as he believed."

So far all is clear, but the tale recounted by Percival embraces more than this, and the Eucharistic experience of Galahad as related by himself, and his "passing" as told by the one eye-witness, are alike

beset with difficulties. As regards the "Sacring of the Mass" and its attendant incidents, we must bear in mind the necessity laid upon the poet by the conditions of his task, the obligation to maintain the mediæval character of his story. This he has succeeded in doing, but he has done more, informing the mediæval faith and conception of sacred things with something higher and yet simpler than mediæval piety enshrined in its mysteries.

"And at the sacring of the mass I saw
The holy elements alone."

TO Percival as yet no inner vision is accorded, but Galahad sees according to his sight. To his eyes the spiritual presence takes visible form and semblance—"the form as of a child, the fiery face smiting itself into the bread." Thus does the legend take Eucharistic shape, and the achievement of the Grail find intermediate fulfilment in the worthy partaking of the Holy Supper. But it rests not here. "My presence shall go with thee" is its sacred and happy sequel, and thenceforth Galahad never fails of that high Vision, its sustaining strength and constant succour. "Never yet hath this Holy Thing failed from my side." By night and day it is his to animate and to guide. In the strength of this "he shatters evil customs everywhere;" ever "in the strength of this comes

victor." Spiritual perception and spiritual succour are not confined to special occasions, however sacred, however paramount their opportunities of grace.

But Galahad must go; his time is near at hand. Not back to Arthur's Court to tell of Pagan realms traversed in victory; of Pagan hordes shattered and vanquished "in the strength of this;" but on, to the Spiritual City, there to receive his crown, the crown of those who, in this world's warfare, lose themselves, "for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life—the same shall save it."

The story of Galahad's passing reads like a dream, and it is meant to read like a dream, a dream one can account for and half explain, a dream in which the actual and fanciful are intermingled, but of which, the phantoms passing, the underlying and suggesting reality remains, touched with a glory that has faded and yet a glory that can never fail.

The Hill that none but man can climb is one which ascends from Earth to Heaven, not the Delectable Mountains, nor the Excelsiors, but the heights of Immortality. The valleys and the "swamps of evil smell, part whitened with the bones of men," show Earth as one vast cemetery, the grave and final goal of every creature save man himself, and of man too but that "some ancient king had built a way." By that way went Galahad, and to Percival, rapt in wonder and amaze, yearning to follow, it seemed as though the heavens opened; he heard the shoutings of the Sons of God. Transported and confused he saw as though he saw not. Was it a boat, or was it some "living

creature clad with wings" that bore his friend still farther from his view, and was the splendour yonder the shining glory of the Spiritual City? Who shall tell? It is phantom, vision, beyond doubt. Is it delusion too? This ecstasy, is it a mockery, or a permitted momentary access of the soul, by such approach as this our frailty can admit, to the precincts of its future home? The veil that hides the great unknown seems less dark when we watch men passing through. Imagination gives shape and semblance to what faith believes and hope desires. We can only think this way. The picture may be altogether false, altogether unworthy, but the picturing is a necessity of our nature and of our spiritual nature too. It is false, only in so far that it is unworthy. It is true, in that the reality will transcend our visions by as much as the glory that shall be revealed shall exceed the highest that it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Galahad is gone, and Percival, widowed and wondering, staggers back, how he knows not, back to the scenes of daily life and duty. He finds his hermit and his horse, and so returns to whence he came, "the gate of Arthur's wars." Is all this too high-pitched? Let those answer whose privilege in life it has been to share with such as Galahad, and such there are and have been, the communion of lofty souls, those who have seen them pass behind the veil and, with their own souls at utmost tension, yearning to follow, have almost thought they heard the welcomes of heaven, and saw the white robes of the blessed ones

beyond. And then the dull reaction, the painful presence of palpable dissolution; the call of duty, the daily round, the common task, once more! How *our* feet recross the deathful ridge we know not, but here, for us also, is our horse and our hermit; the rest is like a dream.

" Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest;
No man, no woman?"

AH! Ambrosius. This level is too high. Few of us reach these planes of thought; none of us keep them long. As Wordsworth tells us:—

"'Tis the most difficult of tasks to keep,
Heights which the soul is competent to gain."

The quaint pathos of the monk's appeal for something tangible and non-phantasmal is irresistible. His humility and candour are alike refreshing. Monastic seclusion and discipline have not succeeded in quenching his sympathetic nature. He is still, though he apologizes for the fact, a man. He can delight himself with gossip of old wives, their homely secrets and mirthful sayings; nay, even, so unsparing is his confession, he can be interested in their hens and their hens' eggs. Somehow one likes him all the more. Ambrosius is no complement to Percival, Galahad, and the Knights of the Quest, neither is he in any sense antagonistic. He is merely anti-polar.

The simple monk asks for a lower and a simpler tale, something more tangible and measureable altogether, and it is not without some sense of relief from tension that we resign ourselves to the story of human love struggling with consecrated dedication, as we listen to the Knight, now speaking in a lower key. Already in the vision of the house that became no better than a broken shed, falling into dust at his approach, had he been warned, as in a dream, that domestic joys, however pure and innocent, were henceforth not for him. But these were phantoms, and the trial of his faith and faithfulness now to be related is actual and severe. He comes upon the princely home of one whom he had loved and lost, whom, again finding, he found he still could love. It is not merely now "fair the woman's eyes and innocent" of her who bids him "rest here," but it is one, a Princess, who offering him, not in vision but plain reality, "land and wealth and state," proffers herself and all her wealth to him her earliest love. It is a Princely prize, itself made richer yet by the allegiance of the heads of all her people:—

> "Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
> And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land."

But the vow prevails. He tears himself away, and yet not victoriously. As after his vision he had said in bitterness of soul "If I find the Holy Grail itself and touch it, it will crumble into dust," so now he hates himself, and even that Holy Quest which, rashly vowed, now separates him for ever from one

whom he fain would make his own. "I hated mine own self." He has not yet *lost* himself, but the conflict has been bravely fought, and when he has joined Galahad the victory is won; henceforth he "cared not for her, nor anything upon earth." The comment of Ambrosius is nature itself—"O the pity of it!"

Despite this semi-contrite apology for his very human way of looking at these things, the curiosity of Ambrosius is whetted rather than allayed, and he again suggests another subject promising human interest and possible adventure—"Saw ye none beside, none of your knights?" And Percival tells him of Sir Bors.

"He well had been content not to have seen
So Lancelot might have seen."

SIR BORS, though ever in the background, is by no means the least attractive of the characters engaged in the Quest. In him we have a natural humility and unconscious self-sacrifice which are in striking contrast to the same virtues hardly attained by others. He has not the least idea that he is good. He would rather Lancelot saw the Grail than he himself, and, when constrained to tell of how the Grail appeared to him, is overwhelmed with the sense of his unworthiness. Apart

from the pre-eminent attractiveness of this character as a portraiture, there is a distinct value in the discovery it affords that the vision of high and holy things is not confined to those who sedulously, by process of mortification, or conscious self-sacrifice, strive to attain the same. Here also is it true that things hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes. Sir Bors is as simple as a child. "A square-set man and honest" he appeared to Ambrosius. "His eyes smiled with his lips," a sure sign of sincerity. When the lips smile without the eyes it is not Sir Bors we have to do with but rather Chaucer's Nun, who "of her smiling was full simple and coy." But there is a sadness too about Sir Bors which somewhat perplexes the monk. His should have been a quite unclouded brow. "Heaven had meant it for a sunny one;" but care for Lancelot oppresses and beclouds him, and so he rides on heavily, absorbed in solicitude for his too impetuous kinsman.

> "Small heart was his after the Holy Quest.
> If God would send the vision, well; if not,
> The Quest and he were in the hands of heaven."

And it is to him—and to him in this frame of mind—that the Vision is accorded. "*Laborare est orare.*" He "scarce had pray'd or ask'd it" for himself, but for Lancelot he had striven, for Lancelot had prayed, and now that self-forgetting labour, that earnest striving for another's gain—as real a losing of self as Galahad's or Percival's—proves to be even for his own need, a true and effectual importunity, and is approved as such in its exceeding great reward.

The final glimpse of Sir Bors shows him shunning observation and vainly trying to hide himself, if so he might, behind Sir Lancelot; but the King sees him, and demands his answer, nothing doubting what that answer will be, for

> "if ever loyal man and true
> Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail."

Then, what to some would have been a proud moment of self-conscious avowal is to Sir Bors an occasion of positive distress. Abashed and confused, he confesses his privilege as if it were a fault:—

> "Ask me not, for I may not speak of it,
> I saw it,—and the tears were in his eyes."

Never, surely, was there a more true humility. Amazed that his should be the Vision, oppressed by the sense alike of his imperfect quest and deep unworthiness, he shrinks from owning the distinction which in that presence he dare not disavow. Three syllables suffice to tell his tale, and the utterance of these brings tears into his eyes. He hides himself in the throng of eager knights, and we hear of him no more. No one can imitate this true and loyal man, but who would not exchange his own best endeavours after good for that unconscious goodness which was to Sir Bors unconscious glory?

Doubtless there are those still who hardly dare to ask, who yet abundantly receive. Unworthy of the crumbs, they are summoned to sit at the table. Touching with trembling hands only the hem of the garment, theirs is the instant recognition, and though

they would hide in the crowd, they may not. They are not conscious of having done anything to deserve such favour. Like those who said "When saw we Thee in prison?" they shrink from a higher appreciation than their own, are slow to recognise their recognition, and can hardly lift their faces to receive the smile of Divine welcome and approval. The channels of grace are as various as its springs are abundant. It is well for man that grace finds those who never would find grace.

"Tell me, what said each, and what the King?"

AMBROSIUS is an admirable questioner, and with the answer to this, his last enquiry, we reach at once the climax of the story and its end. The replies of Percival and Bors, of Lancelot and Gawain, to the King's demand for their several experiences, represent, or must be held to represent, the varied fortunes of the Arthurian knights who have, through worse or better fortune—"scarce returned a tithe"—found their way back to Camelot. The answer of Gawain is an unblushing avowal of absolute failure. His light-hearted candour is not without hint of a disposition to disparage that which he cannot understand, and as such it draws down from Arthur a well-merited rebuke. None the less, Gawain is representative, and his story rewards a close attention.

At the taking of the vows we remember how "Gawain swore, and louder than the rest," and now, when Arthur asks—"Gawain, was this quest for thee?"—his answer, bold even to effrontery, at once reveals how hollow was his vow—"'Nay, Lord,' said Gawain, 'not for such as I.'" But he too had sought, like Percival and Lancelot, for saintly counsel and communed with his hermit. He too had realized, like Percival in his despair, that the Quest was not for him, but to him this discovery was welcome, releasing him from an irksome task and uncongenial enterprise: already he "was much awearied of the Quest." What he renounces, he denounces too. His own experiences, when they failed to amuse, seem simply to have wearied this recreant knight, but the recital of the adventures of Lancelot exasperate him into contemptuous derision of an enterprise for which, having no fitness, he could receive no call.

As a novelty of mere adventure, save for one untoward incident far less momentous than the trials of Percival, his "twelvemonth and a day" had been "pleasant" to him, but now he boldly swears that the whole thing is madness or folly. In Quests or service of the King he had not failed, nor would he fail, but—"as for thine, my good friend Percival, thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad." That this renunciation is not to be attributed to any truer perception of duty and allegiance, but something lower, grosser, and, despite its loud-lipped loyalty, unworthy of a knight, the stern rebuke instantly administered by Arthur, at once makes clear—

> "Deafer, said the blameless King,
> Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,
> Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
> Being too blind to have desire to see."

It is one thing to disallow the Quest, as Arthur did, and say "Had I been there ye had not sworn the vow," and quite another to denounce and depreciate it in the spirit of Gawain; one thing to deplore misdirected energy and the substitution of fanatical imitation of men for simple obedience to God and cheerful compliance with the conditions he may have assigned us, and another to mock at desires we do not share, aspirations and endeavours which are as much beyond us as the flight of the bird beyond the trail of the worm. The foolish clamour of this loud-voiced knight sets in clear light the danger of passing judgment on efforts and actions which we do not, and perhaps cannot, understand, even when, failure being evident, and shame and disappointment the only apparent issue, facts themselves may seem to justify our censure. The very naughtiness of Gawain's raving against the madness of the Quest brings out into stronger relief the solemnity and sad severity of the King's final appraisement of the whole. But Lancelot has yet to tell his tale.

"Thou, too, my Lancelot, ask'd the King, my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd for thee?"

THE character of Lancelot is by much the most difficult rightly to appraise of this Arthurian drama. As a narrative study of a brave man's conflict with a permitted, even a cherished sin, which robs him of attainment of all to which his higher nature would aspire, it has a peculiar interest. If, as the Ancients said, "a good man struggling with adversity is a spectacle for the Gods," these struggles of Lancelot with the fatal entanglements of a lawless love are a spectacle for men, worthy alike of candid observation and considerate sympathy. The question is, whether Lancelot is a type, his conflict typical, and so didactic as well as dramatic; or, whether the character as well as the experiences must be regarded as exceptional or unique. But little examination is needed to convince us that no temptation but such as is common to man has in truth befallen him; only the conditions of the fable are such that everything is, as it were, seen against the skyline, so looming large, like the crest of Sir Bors against the moon. "I saw the pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors all in the middle of the rising moon." Lancelot's vow was undoubtedly genuine—nay it was made with all the strength of his nature, which is strong. He can do nothing feebly. Henceforth he is committed to a conflict as well as a quest, and the conflict maddens him. It is not mere renunciation which his vow

demands, but the plucking out of the right eye, and the cutting off the hand. The measure of his sinful love for Guinevere is found in the pitiful story of Elaine, the prize of whose pure heart he had disdained —"foregoing all her sweetness like a weed"—for the fatal favour of the unworthy Queen, even as Percival the love of the Princess who proffered him "herself and all her realm." But Percival was bound by his sacred vow, Lancelot only by his disloyal love. "His honour rooted in dishonour stood, and faith unfaithful kept him falsely true." This seems at first to be so remote from all that belongs to our easy-going days and level respectabilities of things as to afford scant instruction for ourselves, but the difference is after all in the accidents not in the essence of the strife. We live our real life, each one of us, at very different levels from those of even our comrades at the same table, "round" or square. Some are content, as Gawain, with the lowest life; some, conscious of the distance between their ideal and their actual, the "what they would be" and "what they are," strive to beat their music out, and find, even in their darkest hour, that "power is with them in the night," and these at least know how hard is the endeavour to maintain the quest, when every day demands its necessary service, service of duty, service of drudgery, service of compliance with usage and even with Fashion—to say nothing of the possibility of a thraldom, like that of Lancelot, to positive dishonour and wrong. Lancelot's contention that his "sin" was intertwined with all that was pure and noble in

knighthood, so that wholesome flower and poisonous weed growing together could not be plucked asunder, sounds passing strange and is denounced by Arthur as false and futile.

> "Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot. Never yet
> Could all of true and noble in knight and man
> Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
> With such a closeness but apart there grew
> * * * * * *
> Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
> Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower."

Which is right? This is no simple case of serving God and Mammon. It is no struggle between flesh and spirit, but a spiritual struggle between spirit and spirit,—allegiance to Honour and obedience to God. Affections engaged, pledges and promises exchanged, hold us, like Herod's vow, in "honour" bound to their fulfilment. Nay, care for others there may be, compromised in our offending. The net is no less strong that we have woven it ourselves. Can these be plucked asunder? Lancelot fondly hopes that, if he once can see the Grail, they may. He too takes counsel of a saintly man, and his hopes are dashed at once. Not until he has plucked these asunder can he hope to see the Grail. It comes to this—None but the pure in heart can see the Grail, yet none, until they have beheld it, can be pure. Nor is this a hopeless paradox. *Solvitur ambulando.* Every effort after the vision of holiness is illumined by its rays. Every genuine aspiration after the high and holy is itself inspired.

"O dull of heart! enclosed doth lie
In each 'Come, Lord,' a 'Here am I.'
Thy love, thy longing, are not thine
Reflections of a love divine."*

The false and the true must indeed be plucked asunder, but how? "Look to the true," is the counsel of the King, "and it will bear its flower." "Pluck out the false," is the direction of the Saint, "else will it choke the true." Which is the wiser way? Which corresponds best with the Hermit's warning to Percival—"thou hast not lost thyself"? Well has it been said—"the best way of keeping chaff out of a sack is to fill it with wheat." We cannot keep out darkness but by admitting light. We purify our atmosphere by letting in the air. The King is right. Nor is the Saint deceived. Alas for Lancelot, he knew not what to do. His madness came upon him as of yore, and he dashed wildly on. "Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest so holy?" is the expostulation of Sir Bors, amazed at his headlong course. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force," but is this the violence that prevails? The issue shows it otherwise. He will plunge into the great sea and find his cleansing in its boundless waters :—

"I will *lose myself*
And in the great sea wash away my sin."

Vain, very vain. Not all the waters of Ocean will

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* TRENCH'S "Suppliant."

avail. Rather will it be as with the crime of Macbeth :—

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine
Making the green, one red."

He plunges headlong on, and, reaching the towers of Carbonek, finds, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, his progress barred by lions. The intention in either allegory is the same. "Doubt not, go forward," sounds in the ear of Lancelot. "Fear not the lions for they are chained and are placed there for trial of faith," says Watchful to Christian. It is not faith that Lancelot lacks. So far, he passes safely on, and speeds, as in a dream, to where the sounds of a great worship fill the air. The door is closed, but, in the madness of a violence which will not be denied, he forces the portal, and lo, blasting instead of blessing! Not for the unholy is that vision, not for the unclean that song, not for the self-relying and the confident that Holy Presence. Blinded and blasted he recoils, moaning in the misery of his despair, "the Quest is not for me." Is it then thus? Is it that faith which can pass the lions can not of itself prevail? Is it that fervour which will break through, as with a sacred fury, the very barriers which Angels guard, is of no avail? It must be so. "Without *holiness* no man shall see the Lord." Nor indeed *can* he. Heaven were no heaven to such as Lancelot. Like those gates of Paradise closed upon our first parents, dismissed their happy seat—"the gates with dreadful faces

thronged and fiery arms"—the brightness is a consuming fire, the averted faces of the holy ones are "too severe to be beheld," the hymns and adorations only affliction to the outcast soul. Can this be the end? If so, "happier the swine that cannot see for slime"; happier Gawain, "being too blind to have desire to see." Lancelot must surely yet be freed from his madness and his sin. This discipline of pain must have a purpose and an end. It is a discipline made necessary not merely by the magnitude of the sin but by the cleaving to it still and the presumption of retaining its indulgence along with the prosecution of the Quest. Like those of old who kept back part of the price—the sin is even greater than it seems. If Lancelot is to see the Grail that sin must not only be abandoned but abhorred. This is the lesson of it all. By strength of will we may indeed abandon, but by the grace of Heaven alone can we abhor, the sin, or replace the earthly affection by the heavenly. This we have seen in Percival. By a stern and uncompromising effort of his will he tore himself away from his Princess, but he could no more —nay, he hated not only his "own self" but "even the Holy Quest and all but her." Not till he was "joined with Galahad" was his emanicipation perfect, then and thenceforth he "cared not for her, nor anything upon earth." What we have seen in Percival, we look for yet in Lancelot.

"And some among you held, that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow."

IN this lofty justification of his refusal of the quest we have from the blameless King not only a vindication, sustained by the evidence of many adventures, but a far-reaching utterance worthy of the occasion and of the leader of men. The King is all for duty first and vision afterwards. Just as Langland's Piers the Plowman refused to accompany the searchers after Truth till he had first ploughed his "half-acre and sowen it after," so Arthur tells his knights that "the King must guard that which he rules, and is but as the hind to whom a space of land is given to plough." Nor does this devotion to the claims of duty preclude the satisfaction of the soul with the realization of its highest aspirations. So far from this he claims, and truly claims, for such as do not wander from the allotted field before their work be done, that they find reality where others at the best attain but to vision, and reduce to vision what still remains the only reality to these. The idea of all this is by no means new. It has been made familiar by the *Sartor Resartus* of Carlyle, it has been taught us in language of surpassing power in the impassioned valedictory of Shakespere's Prospero.* But, none the less, the actual relation of the seen to the unseen world is here brought home to us with a superior force, declaring now no abstract or prophetic truth but meeting our actual desires and noblest aspirations

* Appendix.

with a "calm certainty of waking bliss" and lofty corrective of exhortation which, if it once finds lodgment in the mind, must surely find expression in the life. Vision?—Yes. But what is visionary and what is real? To him who does his duty there will come—and "many a time they come"—perceptions of priceless value, when

> "this earth he walks on seems not earth,
> This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
> This air that smites his forehead is not air,
> But vision—yea his very hand and foot—
> In moments when he feels he cannot die."

Then too he "finds himself" in his veritable and imperishable reality, loses the palpable and perishing, dismissing it as a garment, and feels the throb of immortality.

"In moments when he feels he cannot die."

HOW wisely worded! The man who has none of these moments is unworthy of his immortality, the man who disdains all other moments is at issue with the conditions of his being and the laws which govern his probation. "In moments when he *feels*." We know it always, but we cannot feel it always. Moments such as these are presages of Eternity; then indeed, as Earth recedes and Heaven seems nearer, then, even here, is "the high God no

vision, nor that One who rose again." The things which are seen of all men are seen *through*, and "the things which are not seen" break on the spiritual vision, eternal and near at hand.

"So spake the King: I knew not all he meant."

NOR can we hope to know as yet all that these words enfold. The unfolding will come—come soon—but meanwhile, duty becomes nobler, life richer, and toil and trouble but as "the fierce vexation of a dream"; best and happiest of all, the Vision of the Highest is vouchsafed, not to the lowest but the lowliest, and, as we draw nearer to the Unseen, we realize more and more clearly the beatitude pronounced of old by Him whose hands were human hands and whose feet went about doing good—"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

SUCH, as we read it, is the "Holy Grail." Delightful as a tale of Chivalry, and exquisite as a poem, its chiefest value lies after all in the message which it bears. Let the legends, Christian or Romance, be as fabulous as they may; the warp and woof of the fabric as pure imagination as the Myths themselves; there yet remains an earnest teaching, imperishable in its truth, which has ministered to the wants of age after age, yielding to each in turn as much as it could receive, and now furnishing to ourselves a lesson of life and living, helpful as hopeful, practical as precious. "*Quot homines tot causæ.*" We are not, many of us, Galahads or Percivals; few, very few, approach the unconscious worth of good Sir Bors; but we need not be Gawains or Guineveres, we will not be as Lancelot, and we cannot be as Arthur. Yet surely for us also is there a vision: no phantom cup, no mystic semblance "clothed in white samite"—these may go, with the spear of Longinus and the sword of the Maccabees—but we, "toilers in distant fields," even we "have still a King." We too seek, feebly or fervently, fitfully or faithfully, some assurance, even now, of that Presence which "in moments when we feel we cannot die" our nature yearns for, and our souls require. In such hushed moments we can hear the message well, and there is comfort in its assurance that not only to lofty aspiration and high sanctity is it given to pierce and pass the "veil," not only to

intense and ardent faith to penetrate the mysteries and realize the verities of the "unseen," but to obedience and lowliness of heart, to self-distrust and contrition of spirit, is there vouchsafed the revelation of God. To the conscious "quest," demanding of the seeker great renunciations and special dedications, attainment is indeed assured, but to all the children of men comes yet once more, revoiced but never to be revoked, the instruction of the Prophet—"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and love mercy and—*to walk humbly with thy God.*"

APPENDIX.

Sanctus autem Philippus, ut testatur Freculfus, libro secundo, capitulo IIII° regionem Francorum adiens gratia prædicandi, plures ad fidem convertit ac baptizavit: volens igitur verbum Christi dilatari, duodecim ex suis discipulis elegit, ad prædicandum Incarnationem Jesu Christi, et super singulos manum dexteram devotissime extendit, et ad evangelizandum verbum vitæ misit in Britanniam: quibus, ut ferunt, *carissimum amicum suum Joseph ab Arimathea, qui et Dominum sepelivit præfecit.* Venientes igitur in Britanniam anno ab incarnatione Domini LXIII° ab assumptione Beatæ Mariæ XV° fidem Christi fiducialiter prædicabant.

—*Gale, Hist. Ang. Sax. Ang-Danicæ Scriptores, xv., t. 1, p. 292, Oxon, 1691.*

"O Heaven, it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future Ghost within him; but are, in very deed, Ghosts! These Limbs, whence had we them; this stormy Force; this life-blood with its burning Passion? They are dust and shadow; a Shadow-system gathered round our ME; wherein, through some moments or years, the Divine Essence is to be revealed in the Flesh. That warrior on his strong war-horse, fire flashes through his eyes; force dwells in his arm and heart: but warrior and war-horse are a vision; a revealed force, nothing more. Stately they tread the Earth, as if

it were a firm substance : fool ! the Earth is but a film ; it cracks in twain, and warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet's sounding. Plummet's ? Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago, they were not ; a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not.

So has it been from the beginning, so will it be to the end. Generation after generation takes to itself the Form of a Body ; and forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night, on Heaven's mission APPEARS. What Force and Fire is in each he expends : one grinding in the mill of Industry ; one hunter-like climbing the giddy Alpine heights of Science ; one madly dashed in pieces on the rocks of Strife, in war with his fellow :—and then the Heaven-sent is recalled ; his earthly Vesture falls away, and soon even to Sense becomes a vanished Shadow."

Sartor Resartus, Bk. iii. ch. 8.

"These our actors,
As I foretold you were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air :
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep." 213

—*Tempest, Act iv., Sc. 1.*

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